

87  
THE  
SAINTS POSTURE  
IN DARK TIMES.

Shewing what peaceable spirits  
they should have under dark and unex-  
pected dispensations.

SET FORTH  
In a SERMON Preached in the Ca-  
thedral in Gloucester, on the 17<sup>th</sup>. of  
March. 1649.

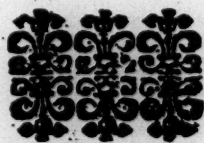
Being the Lords day, and the time of the  
publick Asize.

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By A. PALMER. M. A.

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Isa. 30. 18.  
*Blessed are all they that wait for him.*



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yard, neer the little North-doore. 1650.

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*Viro multis nominibus colendo*

**JOHANNI WILDE,**

*Capitali Scacarii Baroni*

*Judici sanè acquissimo*

*Concionem hanc*

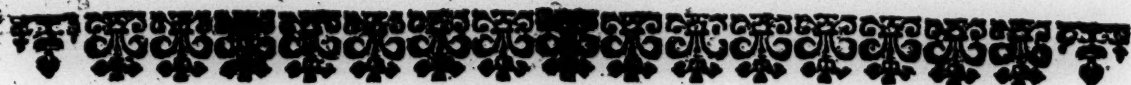
*De Deo expectando*

*Gratitudinis & officii impensè Debiti*

*pignus; humiliter, & devotè.*

**D: D. D.**

**A. Palmer.**







TO MY  
CHRISTIAN FRIENDS  
AND READERS, SPECIALLY  
of the County of Gloucester.

**S**OME of you, the ear-witnesses of what is here (with a little enlargement) presented to your view, were pleased in a serious judgement to protest my obligation to publish these notes, as they might be usefull towards the quieting and composing the spirits of the godly in the complaining times we live in; upon this account you have them; Now, on the contrary, some may fall a judging me for this attempt, but I shall not insist upon the preventing their objections; If God have the least glory, and any soul helpt forward in his blessed wayes, by what he hath here taught me, twill, with men, abundantly bear down what ever prejudice or misprision can raise.

Onely, if any will say, What make I among  
the Prophets? Let him answer himself, that grace  
is free and boundlesse, and then I shall only beg  
this prayer from him, that, To whom much is  
forgiven, he may love much: The Lord keep  
all his people waiting for him, and guide them  
in strait paths, which is the main import of this  
weak discourse, and the prayer of

*Bowton on the water,*  
26. Marc: 1650:

*Tours in the Lord Jesus:*

*A.P.*





## THE SAINTS POSTURE IN DARK TIMES.

ISAIAH Chap. 26. ver: 8.

*Yea in the way of thy judgements,  
Lord, have we waited for thee, &c.*

**T**His Evangelicall Prophet having in the former Chapter declared the great, and blessed deliverances both spirituall, & temporall of Jesus Christ to his people, the glorious propagation of the Gospel, ver: 6. of that chapter, *His removing the face of the covering, and the vail from off all people. v: 7. The taking away the rebuke of his people from off the face of the earth: v: 8. His hand resting upon the mountain of his people, and his enemies trodden down under him: v: 10.* At this chap: he hath composed a song for the Saints and people of God, magnifying the strength, protection, and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, ascribing all the glory unto him; set forth indeed in a most sweet and admirable holy eloquence as any Scripture we meet with.

In this letter these deliverances, for which this song and exaltation of the Lord is calculated, may refer either to that burden of the Moabites, described so full of woes, Chap: 15. and 16. or to that famous deliverance by the hand of Cyrus, and so this song may be conceived to be one of those which the Babylonians so sharply taunted them with in the captivitie, *Sing us one of your songs of Zion, Psal. 137.* this the chief of those Songs. But as all that was typicall of Jesus Christ, and the Gospel-times; so this is a song for any people saved by the Lord, when the times of Christs refreshings are neer, and so it may be more then conjectured that the consummation of that glorious rest of the Saints, set forth,

Rev: 22, 14. *Blessed are they that have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates to the City,* may refer to the two first verses of this chapter and Song.

1. Here then briefly you have the Church set forth in a very glorious metaphor, *As a strong City, God appointing salvation for bulwarks,* ver: 1.

2. The Citizens, the Saints entring into it, described by a most excellent character. *The righteous nation keeping truth.* ver: 2.

3. Their most choice and glorious priviledge at the 3<sup>d</sup>: verse, *Kept in perfect peace.*

4. Their lifting up of the name of the Lord as their everlasting strength. v: 4. the rock of ages as the originall.

5. The strange revolutions and turnings of things upside down, v: 5, 6. *He bringeth down them that dwell on high; and the lofty City, and the poore, the feet of the poore shall tread it down.*

At the 7<sup>th</sup>. their adoring the righteousness of God in all his wayes and dispensations, we have severall readings of that Scripture, *The way of the just is uprightness: Via justorum rectitudines,* as the most proper and genuine, that is, The way of God to the just is uprightness, and thou weighest the path of the just, thou makest it to appear to be an exact regular way of righteousness; And under all the varieties of his righteous dispensations, they waited upon him in them: *Yea in the way of thy judgements have we waited for thee, &c.*

In which words you have them minding themselves of that blessed posture, and frame of spirit the Lord put them into, under all his various dealings; We waited for thee; which with the context may be thus analysed.

Thine and our enemies charge thy wayes to be anxious, implicate, and irregular, and thence break forth and murmur, yea blaspheme. But to us whose minds were stayed on thee, *Complanas viam,* thou clearest up all thy wayes, as beautifull and regular; and we have *waited upon thee, for thee, in them.*

Whence this plain, and I hope seasonable observation:

*That when God walks in strange and various dispensations towards his people, and towards his enemies, his people are to wait upon him, to wait for him.*

In the handling of which, I shall first open the duty, shewing the



the excellency of this frame of spirit; lay down the grounds and reasons of the point; and so bring it down to the dispensations we live under; Now to make up this frame of spirit, you have these choice ingredients.

1. It is a posture of reliance and rowling upon God, making him alone our rock, our salvation, our defence, our refuge; as you have *David* sweetly giving forth this part of it, *Psal.* 62. A renouncing of all other refuges whatsoever, no calling to *Ægypt*, or *Assyria* for aid and succour; but strengthening themselves in the rock of ages, and thence reasoning themselves into an assured safetie; therefore *we shall not be greatly moved*, v: 2. of that *Psalme*; and *we shall not be moved*: v. 6. not moved at all, as *David's* faith there gets ground upon God.

This is the venture, and resolved recumbency upon the All-sufficiencie of *Jehovah*, given forth in so many clear and stedfast promises, wherein he stands recorded the unchangeable rock of his people, a refuge from the storme, a shadow from the heat when the blast of the terrible ones is against the wall, v: 4. of the former Chapter; and as excellently given forth in that bottome promise, *The eternall God is thy refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms.* *Deut.* 33. 27. Now while the great God is fulfilling those upon the face of the earth, in the beginnings of revenges upon his enemies, *Deut.* 32. 42. his right hand teaching him terrible things, and appearing the God of his people, under all his various dispensations his people shall *trust in him at all times*: *Psal.* 64. 8. they shall still gather in their spirits, and answer all their fears, with this, we will wait upon him, who is our Rock, mighty and able to save. This is the first ingredient in this frame of spirit, tis to have our minds stayed upon God.

2. Tis a posture of expectation; *Psal.* 62. 5. *My soul wait thou upon God, for my expectation is from him.* *A watching for God.* *Psal.* 130. 6. *A standing still to see the salvation of the Lord.* Not running before the Lord, not prescribing unto him, or limiting him unto our wayes or seasons; laying aside our own counsels, and inventions, and waiting for the counsell of the most wise God, having our eyes fixed, and our expectation clear and pure upon him. Though he tarry yet to wait for him: *Hab.* 2. 3. This the second ingredient to make up this frame of spirit, to have our expectation clear upon God.

3. Tis

3. Tis a posture of submitting unto the Lord ; putting our mouths in the dust, yeelding unto him , even when he writes bitter things against us ; when he puts a cup of trembling into our hands, humbling our selves, under his mighty hand. *Deut. 33. 3. Yea he loved the people. And all his Saints are in thy hand, and they sate down at thy feet.* At the feet of God, submitting to the teachings of God, and the outward dispensations of God. *Jerome* reads, we waited, *Sustinuimus te*, we have sustained God, we have yeelded unto thee, we have nothing to plead against thee, our lives, our all are in thy hand. And therefore glorifie thy greatnesse upon us as is good in thine own eyes. This the third thing, a submission unto God in his various dispensation.

4. Not only a submission but higher, tis a posture of contentation; thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose minde is staid on thee, ver: 3. A composed contentednesse with all the wayes of God, that *εὐδαιμόνεια*, that tranquillity and clearness of spirit which gives a man the possession of his own soul ; A spirit freed from reasonings, frettings, complainings and contendings with God, but fetcht down, and subdued by the mighty working of God, to be contented with all his various dispensations and changes, how crosse soever to our contrivements. This the 4<sup>th</sup>. thing, A contentednesse under Gods dispensations.

5. Yea farther. Fifthly, Tis a posture of admiration ; so, *Isa. 25. 1. Thou art my God, I will exalt thee; I will praise thee, for thou hast done wonderfull things ;* All the wayes of God are full of wonders, and he delights to have them sought out of all that fear him , to be admired in them. So *Psal. 65. Praise waiteth for thee in Zion: his people wait to praise, and admire him in all his dealings towards them.* I might instance in more particulars, but these take in the main of the duty ; Every grace of the spirit having its peculiar acting to make up this harmony of a waiting posture; Take them then together.

Thus to relye, to expect, to submit to, to be contented, to admire, and magnifie the wise and holy God , in all his dark and various dispensations, is a covenant frame of spirit whereby God entitles himself to any soul, to any people; tis, in a word, to have the Lord for our God.

Now having opened the duty it self ; the next thing is to clear the



the point, and the grounds of it; That his people are thus to wait upon him, to exercise these graces, when God is in a way of various and secret dispensations towards them.

I might shew you the people of God frequent in this blessed posture, when God was making bare his arm unto them; A Scripture or two to clear it. See 2 Chron. 20. 12. *O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do, what then? why, our eyes are upon thee, we wait upon thee.*

Thus when God walked in such hidden paths to his people, and brought them into such sad depths, Lament. 3. 26. we know not what to do; the Prophet at last, in the name of the Church, resolves all their lamentations, complaints, and sinkings into this posture of spirit; *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* In how many Psalms have you David in behalf of himself and the Church, working his heart into this posture: Psal. 62. 1. *Truly my soul waiteth upon God,* or notwithstanding, as the originall; abruptly breaking forth from the reasonings of his own spirit, and the apprehensions of the depths he was in, Be it so, notwithstanding my soul waiteth upon God; it shall trust, and hope, and submit, and be contented with all his wayes.

First, the wayes of God are secret wayes, therefore his people are to wait upon him in them. A way full of depths. See Isa. 40. 12. *Who hath measured the waters? or weighed the mountains in a balance? So who hath taught him in the path of his judgements? that is, who is of his counsell, who can search them out? He walks in the waters, and his paths are in the Sea, and his footsteps are not known: Psal. 77. Thy judgements are a great depth. Psal. 36. 6. As in the Psalms, so you have many full and excellent Scriptures speak to this in the book of Job Touching the Almighty, who can find him out? Why doest thou strive against him? for he giveth no account of his matters. Job 33. 13. And this puts Paul himself to his, *o Cadus*, Rom. 11. 33. sometimes he walks as to us, antipodes to his promises (although no providence but is reconcileable to a promise) tis hard to reconcile providences and promises, when he walks in such depths of wisdom and judgement that his people cannot discern him, he leaves no footsteps behinde him; And in such wayes he delights*

to walk in, that his people may wait for him in them; This the first; Gods way in his dispensations, is a secret way, therefore to wait upon him in them.

2. The way of God, though it be a secret way full of involutions, as to us; yet it is an exact regular way of righteousness, mercy, and truth. *Dent. 32.4. His works are perfect, and all his wayes are judgement.* When *Jeremy* would plead with God as to his judgement, first he layes down this as most unquestionable, that God was righteous in them all: *Jer: 12. 1. His walkings may seem to us as crosse paths thwarting one with another; yet take them together, and they are all rectitudes, all conspiring to a most regular, wise and holy end; Though he walks in a cloud as to us, yet he shines in the light of his own righteousness; let men finde out to themselves what crooked paths they please, as you may see Isa. 49. 13. Yet God puts on righteousness as a breast-plate, and can use a crooked tool to bring about a regular work; God with-drawing his light, he is not bound to give; and so he leaves the creature to his own wayes, and he orders a glorious end out of them: man through reasonings, darknesse, unbelief of his heart sees it not, yet still his wayes are deliberately ordered, therefore his people to wait upon him in them; thats the second ground.*

3. When God gives great mercies, when his hand is open and ready to poure them forth, he puts his people in a waiting posture for such mercies. See *Isa. 30. 18. Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgement. Blessed are all they that wait for him.* So you have the Church moving him to be gracious upon this account: *Isa. 33. 2. O Lord, be gracious unto us, we have waited for thee: yea the most glorious promise that our eyes are upon, hath in its fulfilling respect unto thy posture: Isa. 49. 23. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.* It may be more then guest, what designe God hath towards his people, by the posture they are in. He raiseth up the spirits of his people to an expectation of the mercy he gives; This might be abundantly discovered.



vered by the experiences of Gods people, had I time to shew it.

4. God reveals great secrets to those who wait upon him, and for him; this another special ground of the point. There is nothing but I will make known to my servants the Prophets.

*As the eye of the handmaid, &c. Psal. 123.* The servant that waits closely and diligently on his master, knows much of his masters minde and secrets; So the soul that waits closely upon God, knows much of the minde of God. Many a precious secret hath a soul, that truly waits for him.

*Abraham* was an humble man, that had much converse with God, and he revealed that great secret of destroying Sodom and Gomorrah unto him.

1. He reveals directing secrets unto his people, in the 2 *Chron.* 18. good *Micaiah*, who waited humbly, and closely upon God, had a secret revealed unto him, that *Ahab*, if he went up to Ramoth Gilead, he should fall, and perish in it. When there were foure hundred of the most eminent formall prophets of the land advised him to go up, and God would deliver it into the Kings hand, ver. 10. So in that solemne waiting upon God, Chap. 20. of that book, when they were enquiring a right way of God, *Jahaziel* hid a secret that the people should go up and prosper: for God was with them. When his people are in great straits, and brought into lowe depths, then they wait for him, and are guided by his counsell; As their eyes upon him, so his eye upon them also to guide them in all their ways.

2. He reveals strengthning, refreshing secrets to those that wait for him; *Psal. 27. 14. Wait on the Lord, and he shall strengthen thine heart.* So another choice Scripture to this, *Isa. 40. last. But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint.* To omit many curious glosses of some of the Fathers upon this Scripture, this I take to be the import of it; the Eagles do loose their feathers, and renew them, and so are said *repuerascere*, to wax young again; so the people of God under many faintings and sinkings of spirit, when God walks in a cloud towards them, they renew their strength by waiting upon God, when weary, and fainting by inward distresses of spirit, and the inundations and oppressions of enemies. Then the Lord comes in

with a refreshing secret, to bear up their spirits in waiting upon him. Thus *David*, *Psal.* 130.1. *Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee O Lord.* But what relieved him in these depths, he would wait upon his God, *I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, my soul waiteth for the Lord:* ver. 5. 6. as he is there working and composing his spirit to that quieted posture. In a word, that infinite good God that reveals the greatest secret that ever was in heaven to his friends, the secret of the Covenant of his grace. *Psal.* 25.14. and *Job.* 15. 15. *I have called you friends, for all that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.* He, I say, that reveals that secret to a soul, will not deny any directing, strengthening, refreshing secret that is fit for that soul to receive.

This is the 4th ground, God reveals great secrets to those that wait for him.

5. It is of blessed example to all that fear God, it puts an excellency and beauty upon godliness. This use *David* makes of it. *Psal.* 52. 9. *I will wait on thy name, for it is good before thy Saints.* It is good and comely before the Saints of God, to wait upon, to trust, to expect, to submit, to be contented with Gods wayes; thats the 5th. thing, the people of God encourage one another in keeping close unto God, by waiting on him.

6. The Lords stay is not long to those who wait for him. See ver. 20 of the Chap: of my text: *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thy self but for a little moment, &c.* See *Isa.* 54. 7, 8. for a small moment, &c. And in a little wrath &c. The ready way to keep God off, is to murmur against his absence; but quietly to wait for him, is to bring him down with great mercies, and everlasting kindresses, as that Scripture. This the last ground I shall propose to back the Argument I am upon, his stay in no condition or state to his people is long, therefore to wait for him.

Thus have I endeavoured to lay before you the nature, extent, and excellency of this frame of spirit of waiting upon God, with the grounds and reasons of the duty. Now I shall endeavour to meet with such evils that oppose this frame of spirit, and to draw forth such seasonable lessons, as may help in the practice of that duty.

*Appli:*

1.

1. If such a pretious duty be incumbent upon all the people of God,

...wait upon him  
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...against them.  
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...of God  
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...What heart  
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...Lord, and  
...and are now be  
...the Lord is up



God thus to wait upon him under his various dispensations; it then meets with foure great and abounding evils too rise among us. 1. Neglecting the dispensations of God. 2. Misapplying them. 3. Murthering against them. 4. Our prescribing to God.

1. Neglecting, regardlessly slighting the strange, and various judgements and dealings of God with us. These you have described at the 10. 11. and 12. verses of the chap. of my text, when the judgements of God are in the earth, they will not learn righteousness, neither the righteoutnesse of God in the world, nor righteousness for themselves.

*That will not behold the Majesty of the Lord, breaking forth the glory of his judgements in the world: That when his hand is lifted up, they will not see; they will not, they will not, denoting even an utter obstinacy, and obduratenesse of spirit, hardening their faces against the mighty God. I might give many Scriptures to discover the wretched condition of such, need I more then what is said of them v: 14. They are dead, they shall not live; Though yet living, yet but as dead men in Gods account; they are deceased, they shall not rise; rise no more, but visited, destroyed, and all their memory perish.*

Are there not multitudes, multitudes to be found (much to be feared) even given up to such a deep sleep, such a sencelesse, stupid obduration of heart, while God is powring forth his vials upon them.

What heart in any measure affected with the honour of the great God, can choole but be astonished, and tremble to hear and observe their Atheistick darings of God, braving it out against him, and too many, alas, of the gallantry of our Nation, as they stile themselves, men, as to a present discerning, resolved upon the pleasures of sin for a season, and will venture for eternity: that give not themselves the leasure to consider where they are, to reflect upon themselves, but passe from one dark delight to another, to stifle naturall conscience, and to drown themselves in their lusts, that the fear of an avenging God may not teize upon them. Ah, oh fearlesse souls! *seek ye out of the booke of the Lord, and read, Isa. 34. 16. what vials of wrath are there stored up, and are now began to be powred forth; now the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, now he is come forth of his place. to*  
punish

*Punish the inhabitants of the earth*: ver: the last of the Chap of my text. When no place for your excesse of riot, what will you do in the day of Gods visitation? what will you plead to the dreadfull God? oh, fall down at his feet, and visit him, while he is visiting you, least he *tear you peices, and there be none to deliver*; These are yet so far from having any thing to do with the duty of the text, that tis but a derision with them; this the first thing utterly repugnant to the lesson in hand.

2. It meets with our misapplying the judgements and dispensations of God, when the enemies of God, and his people *shall seem to lean upon the Lord, Is not the Lord amongst us? Micha 3. 11*. Yea many that fear God have sure been too busie here, too busie with the sanctuary of God, with the secrets of his counsell, the depths of his walkings towards us; If we would serve providence intentionally and regularly, it must be in Gods way, sutable to his revealed will; but when God walks in the waters, there we cannot follow him: we can cnelly stand still, and admire him, and wait upon him. Though the depths of providence are to be wisely considered of, God, I say, to be admired in them, yet not to be too busie in unwarrantable prying into, and determinings of his counsell, and so misapplying his glorious dispensations.

Thus, we should attend upon the Lord with lesse distraction, we should be more steady in our waies, then we are, yea we should more comfortably wait upon our God, then we do. This the second.

3. It meets with our murmurings against the strange and various dispensations of God, our repinings, reasonings, æstuations of spirit, against his secret wayes, some of a higher nature to be joyned with the former rank of men, growing up to an Atheistick accusing the very righteousness of God, in his permissive ordering providence in the great revolutions that we have been under. But I leave such to what I have said before. I shall speak to these lesser mixtures of these murmurings, even with those that fear God; Murmuring hath like a secret canker, even eat out of the spirits of many this submissive contented waiting upon God; how rife and abounding these are, our own mouths accuse us one to another. This is a very great distemper of spirit amongst us; oh what intemperate (to say no more) repinings, reason-



reasonings, impatient frettings against the present dispensations of God towards us; and truly these do not terminate upon men, but break through men, and ere you are aware, fall foule upon God himself. See *Exod: 16. 8.*

Give me leave, I beseech you, a little to argue with you; What if there are strange turnings of things upside down, the *Lord staining the pride of all the glory of the Nation, whose glorious beauty is as a fading flower?* *Isa. 28. 1.* What if the wayes of God be full of straits in the hands of men, cannot be traced by you? yea more, what if you say you cannot reconcile the exact righteou(nesse) of God, to the crooked paths of men? will you thence fret, and murmur, and charge God foolishly? Let me be bold to tell you, you do no better, by the impatient complaints you are still powring forth; let me ask you; Is not every dispensation regular as to God, and wisely ordered by his counsell? why then do you not submit with contentation of spirit unto the Lord, laying your mouths in the dust, justifying him with silence, but thus countend with God? for the Judge of all the world, cannot but do justly.

Yet further, I shall be more close with you; whats become of your tears and prayers that you mingled, and breathed up to heaven in the dayes of your hardship? whats become of the frequent renewings your strength in the Lord? Yea whats become of the magnified experiences of the presence of a gracious God with you? crying, let this God be our God even unto death; must all these be cancelled and remembred no more; be all lost and mispent, because the Lord walks not in such wayes that you would prescribe him, answers not your expectations?

Yea what lookings back unto ~~Egypt~~, and wishing our selves there again, because we are kept so long in the wilderness, and meet with so many diversions we expected not?

Lastly, whats become of your ancient zeal for the Lord Christ, his Gospel, ordinances, and people? which was so fresh and lively, when you first vowed and professed your selves to be the Lords people? what faintings and flaggings to be found with such, whose zeal for the Lord of hosts was used to warm the hearts and affections of others; even to a giving up of the work of the Lord? Is this to wait upon our God? to have our expectations lively and pure upon him? truly, tis no more, nor lesse, then

to live upon God no longer; not to wait upon him any longer, because we cannot discern nor finde out the depths of his wayes. Were the inside of our murmurings opened, they would be discovered to have all these mixtures in them; oh what have we lost by these repinings? how are they gone up like a cloud, and eclipse the light and beauty of the wayes of God from us? yea how are they like to keep us in the wilderness, we being now at the *waters of Marah*, and that none of us, who came out of *Ægypt*, should ever see the Canaan we expect? We are now indeed just in the condition as the people of God, set forth in *Psal. 106.* all those wilderness provocations to be charged on us: soon forgetting the works of God, and not waiting for his counsell. *v. 13, 14. Provoking him with our inventions: v. 29. Going ill with Moses for our sakes, v. 32.* Thus we have followed our own counsels and inventions, and have not waited for the counsell of the Lord. And this leads me to the 4th. evil, which is to be reprooved; our prescribing to God; the next thing.

How busie hath every one been, and now is, to prescribe to God in his dealings towards us, even to mend every dispensation of God; it had been better thus, or twere better thus; Is not this to limit the holy one of Israel, to prescribe to him? Oh, how full of these inventions are we? As if we were to sit in counsell with the great God, or as if God were to give an account of his wayes to us; plainly, every one, almost, hath a Church and State in this head; and if his way take not, all's lost. Thus what do we, but even call into question the government and sovereignty of God in the world, we would be instructors of God, or indeed God's to our selves. And now let me demand of you, as in the presence of God, the discerners of all our hearts, whether all these evils may not in a great measure be charged upon us this day? and are not as a cloud witnesses against us? and then tell me, is not this the way to kindle the wrath of the Lord against his people, and to provoke him to abhor his own inheritance, *v. 40. of Psal. 106.* Oh, in a word, Is this to have our trust, our expectation, our submission, our contentation, our admiration towards our most wise and gracious God? Is this all the fruit of his owning us his inheritance, and our owning and attesting him, in the face of all the world, to be our God for ever? Surely the Lord  
looked



looked for other things at our hands.

Thus I have endeavoured to set before you the evils that eat out the heart and life of this grace, and duty of waiting upon God, and shall leave you to the searching and proving your own hearts and wayes, and to bring them to the great refiner Jesus Christ, that they may be purged away; And indeed were all of us as busie about the depths of our own hearts, as we are about depths that are beyond, and above us, we should see more of the glory of God in all his dispensations then we do, the Lord would more delight in us, to reveal himself unto us.

That which remains then will be an Exhortation, backt with some few directions, that may help us in the exercise and framing our spirits to the gracious posture of waiting upon him. Let us, as hath been shewed, be convinced of all the evils that oppose it, that they bring a great deformity upon a Christian, and consider what a lustre and beauty this grace adorns our profession with; how sutable to the soveraginty of the Lord, and to the experiences we have had of him; and so laying our selves humbly and composedly at his footstool, quietly waiting that he may be gracious unto us, I shall humbly offer some brief directions, and so leave it to the Lord to work it upon your spirits.

Exhort:

1. What ever the wayes of men appear to you to be, look beyond them, stay not in them; hence issueth much of our disquietnesse, that we look not beyond Instruments; but lifting up our eyes upon him, let us fall a justifying the righteous God, what ever the paths of men are; *True and righteous are thy judgements,* is the hallelujah of heaven, when the vials are powring forth, and so it should be the return of the Saints on earth; let men do what they will, they do nothing but in Gods hand, though their ends do run crosse unto his; this the first.

2. Let us not alwayes go about to bring down God to us, I mean the heights and depths of God to our reasonings; this is it that looseth us before we are aware, and makes us at such losse with God; tis safer to say with David, *Such knowledge is too wonderfull for me, I cannot attain it*: Beware of being too busie with the sanctuary of God, tis the way to make him walk at a greater distance from us.

3. Let us be still a casting either way as to events, and be contented

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tented that God may glorifie himself upon us, as is his own pleasure; So *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 26. If thus, or thus, here am I; as that Scripture is excellently opened by \* one whose praise is in the Gospel; if he make us an ark of safetie, honour, glory, and praise waiteth for him; but if he shall come with a full winde, and scatter the wheat and the chaffe together over the face of the earth; there we are; we shall be ready to justifie God in all he shall bring upon us.

4. To be humble and diligent in enquiring a right way of God, now things are difficult before us, and full of straits; we had need closely to wait upon him, for directing & strengthening secrets, that we may keep *his way*; The truth is, the distance that the godly keep at, and the severall wayes we pursue, do sufficiently witness against us, that we have not been a waiting people, else we should sure have had such communications of the counsell of the Lord, that should have kept us, at least, in love and peace; there would be no such waters of *Marah* troubling, and overflowing our spirits; the divisions of *Reuben* would not be so great; oh that the Lord by me would set something home upon your spirits, that might quicken you to this diligent enquiring a right way of God; that we go not into crooked paths, not to go aside from the revealed rule; but waiting upon God, we may still keep his way. *Psal.* 37. 34.

5. To consider the absolute sovereignty and independencie of God; this will keep down our spirits from rising up against him; you have *David* (on whose spirit the beauty of this grace shines forth almost in every Psalm) much in this contemplation, when he was at a losse; *God hath spoken once, twice have I heard it, that all power belongs unto God. Psal.* 62. 11. *Psalm*, and know that I am God; I was dumbe, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it: He had heard and considered so, that all power belonged unto God, therefore, still, dumbe, not opening his mouth; not a word to say, against Gods dispensations: so mightily was he over-awed with the sovereignty of the Lord.

6. To be much in contemplation of the wisdom of God, there is the light and glory of his wisdom, even in a chaos and confusion of things as we apprehend them, could we discern the  
several



severall motions and concamerations, their severall orderings, and their end in which they center; see 1 Sam. 2. 3. *Talk no more so exceeding proudly, let not arrogancie come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.* How hastie and inconsiderate soever men may be in their transactions, yet by him those very actions are wisely weighed.

7. To concentre, and gather in all our wandring discussions into this period, that the Almighty sovereignty and wisdom of the Lord are both engaged to work in a way of mercy, goodness and love for his people, to all that thus wait upon him; may we reason thus? what? a people in covenant with God, and have hard thoughts of him, and be reasoning against his methods of providence? weigh that Scripture, Ezek. 14. v: last: *You shall know that I have not done without cause, all that I have done in it.* Oh could we thus wait, as a people in covenant, we should at last discover that God hath not done without cause, all that is done upon us; that he had weighty reasons for all his various and *unexpected* dispensations towards us; all in order to the fulfilling of excellent promises upon us.

And now, to close all in a word or two; what a lustre and excellency would this grace, the exercise of it, derive upon all that fear God; And at what a deplorable distance doth the want of it set us at with our God, that *we know not what to do*: we fear a snare where ever we tread. Oh there is nothing in the world but this will bring down the Lord to delight and dwell with us, to make us his inheritance, to go before us in the wilderness we are in, till we shall be at his feet in this posture, and willing to follow him where ever he shall lead us.

The spirits of those in the Nation who have owned the Lord for their God, do cast different aspects, some for great and glorious things, ready for a new Jerusalem, even full of expectation to sing the song of the chapter of the text, *We have a strong City, and God is appointing salvation for bulwarks*: others, (and tis sad to mention you in such distinct characters) that we are like to passe through another fire to it, if ever at all we have it.

I dare not calculate the secret dispensations we lye under, but, as to the symptomes that are at present upon us, surely the holy God will some way or other purge out, in some measure, the self seeking,

seekings, heart burnings, animosities, murmurings, reasonings, he will bring us into strait paths, and raise up our spirits quietly to wait for the mercies he will give forth, as hath been shewed. What ever the Lord hath to do upon us (now he is come out of his place, surely to bring about *a work, a strange work*: Isa. 28. 21.) I say, what ever it be, twill be our wisdom to have our loyns girt, and our lamps burning. Which is the waiting posture held forth by our blessed Lord in the Gospel, strengthened in the Lord, and shining in the beautie of holines; that we may enter. *A righteous nation keeping truth, with our minds stayed upon him, making him our everlasting strength, having quietly and contentedly waited for him; and then we shall sing, Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will rejoyce, and be glad in his salvation.* Isa. 25. 9.

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**F I N I S.**

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